

United Nations

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Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7703rd meeting

Tuesday, 31 May 2016, 10.35 a.m.

New York

President: Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt)

Members:

Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
China	Mr. Shen Bo
France	Mr. Delattre
Japan	Mr. Okamura
Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
New Zealand	Mr. Taula
Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
Senegal	Mr. Seck
Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ..	Mr. Rycroft
United States of America	Ms. Sison
Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would first like to express our sincere gratitude to you personally, Mr. President, and to your team, for the capable leadership and full programme of work you brought to the Security Council this month.

A considerable amount of time has been allotted in May to African issues and to discussing ways of arriving at collaborative solutions to the crises on that continent. As we have said in the Security Council more than once, for us one of the key principles in that context is finding African solutions to African problems. In that regard, we truly appreciate the efforts of the Egyptian and Angolan delegations in convening, on 23 May, the scheduled consultative meeting between the Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, and we commend the importance and timeliness of the holding of an informal segment of the meeting for the first time. It enabled us to conduct a frank and constructive analysis of the current condition of and prospects for cooperation between the two Councils, as well as between the United Nations and the African Union in general, in the maintenance of peace and security. We also discussed country-specific topics of interest.

It was not an easy discussion, but we value the fact that there was no attempt to conceal the existence of various problems in the relationship between the two Councils and that suggestions were made for concrete ways to overcome them. In particular, we acknowledged the importance of ensuring that our consultative meetings are more effective, including improving the effectiveness of our mechanisms for implementing decisions. One especially interesting discussion was on the possibility of organizing joint missions of the two Councils in the field.

The consultative meeting was organically complemented by the holding the next day of an open debate on the issue of cooperation on security between the United Nations and the African Union (S/PV.7694), in which about 50 delegations took part, and at which we adopted presidential statement S/PRST/2016/8 on the subject. In our view, such activities have become a major milestone in our efforts to strengthen the strategic partnership between the two organizations, as well as between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, on the basis of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations and a foundation of genuine mutual respect. This assumes the Security Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and the complementarity between the work of the United Nations and regional organizations, in which each can capitalize on its relative advantages.

Your commitment to the quest for solutions for Africa, Mr. President, was also apparent in full measure in your organization of the Security Council's mission to Kenya and Somalia. We are grateful to Cairo for the hospitality shown to the members of the Council in the Egyptian capital and at the headquarters of the League of Arab States. During that visit, the members of the Council met with the high political representation of Somalia, Kenya and Egypt, received first-hand information on the situation in those countries and in the region as a whole and exchanged views and assessments of many issues on the international agenda. All of the meetings took place in a businesslike and constructive manner and were very well organized.

I would like to say a few words about the situation in Somalia and the challenges that country is facing. We welcome the adoption of the election model, which is aimed at ensuring national reconciliation and uniting the country. The Council members' visit to Mogadishu and the negotiations that took place there served to encourage the Head of State to approve the election model.

However, with regard to establishing a political process in Somalia, we need to be cautious. We must not be hasty in advancing dubious models that could lead to a division of the country. In that context, we should continue to strengthen the unity of Somalia and help to establish an effective Government, army and security force as well as economic reconstruction, in addition to effective ways of combating terrorism.

The visit also demonstrated that Somalia has some promising prospects, but the terrorist problem remains very serious. Thanks to a coordinated, successful operation by African peacekeepers, Al-Shabaab has been contained. However, the terrorists continue to control a significant part of the territory and key roads. Clearly, terrorist groups are receiving external assistance from many sources — material, technical, military and man-power. Foreign terrorist fighters are flocking to the country. That support is being provided at a faster rate than support is being provided to the central authorities and the Somali army and police.

Today the only effective mechanism in addressing the terrorism challenge to the country is the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), whose mandate was unanimously extended by resolution 2289 (2016) until 8 July. We should take account also of the fact that African peacekeepers must deal with broader problems than provided for in their mandates, and with a risk to their own lives. In that connection, we need vigorously to address the issues of AMISOM's capacity. We call for further enhancement by the international community of its support to the Mission in military, financial and logistical terms.

The efforts by the international community to resolve the problems in Somalia are a clear example of practical cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in ensuring peace and security. For that reason, we consider the the Egyptian leadership of the Security Council mission to the country and the conceptual dialogue between the two organizations to have been very well organized and results-oriented. We are confident that the Council's work should be built on such approaches.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to thank and warmly congratulate Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta and the entire Egyptian team for all of their work this month. With great professionalism, they led us through a month that was very busy in every way, particularly with meetings with regional organizations — with the African Union (AU) all of last week and with the Arab League in Cairo, which was a first, as well as with the European Union.

Mr. President, as you have invited us to do, I will address only three of the topics on the agenda of the Council this month. I would like also to say a few words about the main deadlines that we can expect during the month of June.

Mr. President, let me begin by saying that you started off your presidency with a major event, imperative for all of us: the adoption of resolution 2286 (2016), on the protection of medical personnel in armed conflict. Attacks against hospitals have increased in recent years in Syria, Yemen, South Sudan, Afghanistan and elsewhere. We deem it very important that the Council has sent a strong message, and we will have to provide strict follow-up of the resolution in order to ensure that such violations of international humanitarian law do not go unpunished. France will remain mobilized in that regard.

Turning now to the Middle East, I would like to come back to the issue of Syria and to the peace process. The adoption of resolutions 2254 (2015) and 2268 (2016) made it possible to see some progress in resolving the Syrian crisis. After very positive dynamics in March, early May saw a loss of ground. The Geneva talks were suspended and violence resumed, hitting Aleppo even harder than before the coming into force of the cessation of hostilities.

Humanitarian access was very minimal in its progress owing to the siege imposed by the regime, of which Daraya has become a symbol. Given this series of negative developments, the Special Envoy, supported by France and other delegations, called for the holding of another ministerial-level meeting of the International Syria Support Group (ISSG). The Vienna communiqué adopted on 17 May made it possible to reaffirm the commitment of ISSG members to creating the conditions for a credible resumption of negotiations. Most importantly, the communiqué unambiguously reaffirmed the need for the next round of negotiations to focus just on the transition and its modalities for implementation, and this by 1 August.

To date, progress is still minimal, as confirmed by the Special Envoy during the consultations held on 26 May. While the goal of a resumption of political negotiations has been set, we should not be too hasty regarding a fresh inter-Syrian round of talks if conditions to ensure their credibility have not been met. The next few days should focus on the effective implementation of the 17 May communiqué, using, if necessary, those tools that have been agreed to, that is, a ministerial-level meeting of the ISSG and the Security Council.

In the immediate term, the main issue is humanitarian access. If impediments to humanitarian

convoys to all areas under siege are not lifted before June 1, we will have to begin humanitarian air drops. After five meetings of the ISSG and two Security Council resolutions, we should be seeing some real progress in this regard.

Turning now to the peace process, to which we drew the Council's attention on 15 May, we hope that the ministerial-level meeting that we will be holding in Paris on 3 June will make it possible to give a new political horizon for the two-State solution. France has for several months seen the threat of generalized unrest on the ground. That threat is increasing on a daily basis owing to the daily injustices suffered by the Palestinians and the increasing insecurity of the Israelis.

That French initiative was the subject of extensive consultations, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs in April and the Prime Minister last week both visited Israel and the Palestinian territories. The Minister also consulted with our partners in the region and the Quartet in order to build a broad-based consensus. The ministerial-level meeting to be held on 3 June in Paris must be the starting point for political mobilization. The President of the Republic, François Hollande, will open the meeting, in which the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the United States Secretary of State have already confirmed their participation.

Our approach is collective and complementary to the action undertaken by the Quartet, whose upcoming report should provide important information for moving forward. We thank the very large majority of Council delegations as well as others that have supported and continue to support our efforts.

I cannot mention the month of May in the Security Council without revisiting some of the significant events that made it possible for the Security Council to interact with regional organizations, particularly the African Union, throughout the past week. The Council's meetings with the AU Peace and Security Council and the League of Arab States during its trip to Cairo and with the European Union's Political and Security Committee have reaffirmed the importance of cooperation with regional organizations and to promote mutual understanding of the crises of the day.

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of consultations with the African Union, we must remain resolutely engaged in bolstering this strategic partnership. The effectiveness of United Nations action, like that of the African Union, cannot but be

improved through that. In that regard, we welcome the Egyptian presidency's initiative in organizing a Council trip to Somalia, a case in which good cooperation with the African Union is essential to promoting peace and security in the region. That field mission and consultations with the African Union will enable us to better adjust the mandate of the African Union Mission in Somalia, which we will renew in a few weeks, in terms of both offensive actions and respect for human rights.

In conclusion, let me say a few words about the main priorities of our presidency, which begins tomorrow. It will be an extremely busy month of activities for the Council, which we can organize into three main pillars.

First, peacekeeping will serve as the veritable backbone of the month of June. With the ministerial debate on 10 June, led by Minister for Foreign Affairs Jean-Marc Ayrault, we will together take the opportunity to deepen, in the presence of the Secretary-General and the President-elect of the Central African Republic, our understanding of effective and modern peacekeeping in protecting civilians. The exchange will enable us to set the tone of a month that will be particularly active in the area of renewing peacekeeping mandates, including those of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force in the Golan Heights, and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, without mentioning the anticipated results of the strategic review of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic. That is to say, Africa will be at the heart of our presidency.

Secondly, the month of June will also be marked by many important deadlines with regard to the Middle East, including Syria, of course, in all its dimensions — political, chemical and humanitarian. Libya will also be on the agenda, along with Yemen and the peace process, which I have already mentioned. In late June, the Security Council will also receive the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) on Lebanon. June will also be very active with regard to elections in the United Nations. Specifically, we will elect new members of the Council on 28 June.

Lastly, a word on the process of the election of the Secretary-General. The General Assembly

will organize new informal dialogues between the candidates and Member States on 7 June. As in April, I am certain that they will elicit very strong interest on the part of Member States. We commend and encourage this welcome opening. It will be up to the Council to move ahead with its own work within the framework of its responsibilities. In that regard, I thank Ambassador Aboulatta of Egypt for the constructive discussions undertaken under his presidency. It is in that spirit that we will work during our June presidency to ensure the organization and all necessary arrangements for the Council to proceed to the initial voting ballots at the appropriate time.

Again, I thank and congratulate the Egyptian presidency for the high quality of the work in May. You have set the bar very high, Sir.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): I would very much like to warmly congratulate you, Mr. President, for your remarkable presidency of the Council during the month of May. I also wish to congratulate your team on the very excellent performance of the Council and for the results achieved in our common endeavour to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security.

A tangible result of the Egyptian presidency was the progress achieved in the Security Council mission to Somalia and East Africa, which was able to ensure — with the assurance of and delivery by the Somali leadership — that elections will take place according to the agreed model under the set deadline. It is now expected that the international community will assist the Somali authorities in ensuring that elections take place in the best possible conditions, which will represent a substantial contribution to the complex political and security process the country has been going through.

The Security Council's mission to East Africa also included important meetings in Kenya and Egypt. In a meeting held in Nairobi with the President of Kenya and Kenyan high officials, concerns were raised on the future of African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and on the Somali refugees in Kenya. The Kenyan authorities stressed the correlations between the participation of Kenya in AMISOM and Kenyan national security, and the crucial need for greater United Nations support to AMISOM, a matter concerning which the serious attention of the Council

is required. We thank you very much, Mr. President, for putting emphasis on that during the mission to Somalia.

The presence of a considerable number of Somali refugees in Kenya poses a huge security, economic and environmental burden on Kenyan authorities. In that connection, an appeal for the assumption of the principle of shared responsibility was addressed to the international community through the Council's call for support for countries enduring the massive influx of Somali refugees, of course including in Kenya. Those two issues, AMISOM and refugees, justify the Council's renewed attention in order to preserve the gains so far achieved in Somalia and to avoid undesirable developments in case a suitable solution is not found to the refugee issue.

The tenth joint consultative meeting between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council (see S/PV.7694) was another important achievement of the Egyptian presidency. The meeting was an opportunity for both Councils to reaffirm and to find ways to strengthen cooperation, complementarities and commitments in addressing threats to international peace and security in Africa. At the formal meeting held at the Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations, the two Councils assessed the existing partnership at the strategic and operational levels and the need to improve the exchange of information and analysis in all phases of conflict, and discussed the financial, logistical and operational challenges of peacekeeping missions in Africa.

The two Councils also discussed the impact of the three reviews under way of United Nations peace operations, the peacebuilding architecture, and resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. In the formal meeting, the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council discussed the situation in Somalia and Burundi. A candid exchange of views took place, with the two Councils reiterating their support and contribution to those countries on the path to lasting peace.

Since it was established in 2004, African Union Peace and Security Council has deployed or authorized almost 70,000 uniformed peacekeepers to missions in Africa, including the Regional Task Force for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army and the Multinational Joint Task Force set up to fight Boko Haram. Moreover, the African Union established

AMISOM, the hybrid Mission with which we had contact in Somalia.

Despite financial and logistical constraints, the deployment of peacekeeping missions by the African Union Peace and Security Council has been instrumental in supporting the Security Council. Cooperation between the two Councils is based on practical analysis of the African Union's comparative advantages in terms of proximity to the political, social, economic, religious, ethnic and other dimensions of African conflicts. That framework could guide the Security Council in establishing the basis for effective cooperation with the League of the Arab States — a wish strongly expressed by both parties in the meeting held in Cairo on 21 May, when the Security Council mission and the League of Arab States held their first consultative meeting. It is our view that the League of Arab States can make a meaningful and significant contribution to the peacebuilding process in Somalia, which is a member of the Arab League. Both secretariats at the United Nations and the League of Arab States could start discussions on how to operationalize such a partnership, which, in our view, could yield important results in the security, political, social and economic processes under way in Somalia.

In conclusion, I once again reiterate our sincere appreciation to you, Mr. President, for the very skilful way you have conducted the Council during the month of May. We look forward to the French presidency, of which the Ambassador of France has just presented the first outlines to the Council, and we look forward to continue working together with him.

Mr. Suárez Moreno (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would like to recognize the work done by you and your team in advancing the agenda this month. We also welcome the holding of this public wrap-up meeting, in line with the provisions of presidential concept note S/2010/507. Similarly, we appreciate the concept paper prepared by your delegation for this meeting. We have extracted two points on which we wish to dwell. The first refers to terrorism and the second to regional cooperation.

Vulnerability to terrorism and violent extremism is now global in nature. It is manifested, inter alia, in the existence of more than 30,000 foreign terrorist fighters, including young people and women, from at least 100 countries around the globe. Today, no single

region of the world can consider itself free of that phenomenon, much less of the terrorist scourge. In that regard, Venezuela has insisted that the joint role of the Security Council and the international community will be decisive in combating those threats, particularly through the design, implementation and enhancement of strategies that stop the growth of non-State actors.

My delegation underlines once again the importance of prevention in that important and overarching combat; the need to adopt initiatives to combat those groups and extremist ideologies that have set themselves the task of promoting violence and intolerance; to address the root causes that fuel this scourge; and to develop effective and innovative strategies to counter extremist and terrorist narratives and generate critical thinking in society.

For that reason, we welcome Egypt's support in addressing that issue through the holding of an open ministerial debate on countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism (S/PV.7690) on 11 May. That meeting allowed us to address the threat of terrorism from a comprehensive and non-selective perspective, including responses to the scourge based on international cooperation and bearing in mind the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

In that regard, we welcome the adoption of the presidential statement S/PRST/2016/6, which calls on the Counter-Terrorism Committee to submit a comprehensive international framework to include a campaign to counter the narratives of terrorist groups, and also to provide guidelines and good practices to effectively counter, in compliance with international law, the ways that ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities use their narratives to encourage, motivate, and recruit others to commit terrorist acts. In that regard, we call on States Members to actively participate in the drafting of that report, particularly by presenting their national contributions, taking into account the fact that such a campaign should be adapted to the national context of each country.

With regard to regional cooperation, Venezuela considers it important to highlight the meetings held with the League of Arab States, the African Union and the European Union to address issues and challenges of common concern. It is therefore of vital importance to promote the role that regional and subregional organizations can play in finding peaceful and political

solutions to conflicts, preventing such conflicts and designing coordinated strategies for maintaining and building peace, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

In that respect, and taking into account the fact that the agenda of the Security Council continues to be heavily concentrated on issues that threaten peace and security on the African continent, the strategic and complementary partnership between the United Nations and the African Union is even more relevant. The debate on cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union that was held on 24 May (S/PV.7694), highlighted once again the importance of cooperation between those two institutions in finding peaceful solutions to the conflicts affecting the African continent. We need to ensure that the African Union has the predictable and sustainable logistical and financial resources necessary to allow it to deal successfully with its designated tasks assigned in deploying the peacekeeping operations under its mandate. In that regard, we stress the contribution of the African Union Mission in Somalia to peacebuilding in that country. The Mission requires adequate financial resources in order to operate effectively in the context of its mandate.

Furthermore, in reiterating the premise that African problems require African solutions, Venezuela believes that a more active participation of the African Union in Security Council briefings would be appropriate to address issues related to that region, given its recognized legitimacy and political authority in Africa, particularly when considering the renewal, review or restructuring of the mandates of peacekeeping operations that are deployed on the continent.

We insist on the need for further progress in consolidating and enhancing the relationship between both multilateral forums on the basis of mutual respect and in terms of developing common and integrated strategies to tackle the emerging challenges in Africa, on the basis of the comparative advantages of the two organizations, with a view to ensuring improved coordination and synergy between them.

To conclude, we reiterate our thanks for the work undertaken by Egypt and wish every success to the delegation of France for the coming month.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): I would like to take the opportunity of this wrap-up session to highlight several current pressing security concerns, including the situation in Syria, the issue of health care

in armed conflict, and our ongoing efforts to increase cooperation between the Council and the African Union (AU) on security issues.

As we have for many months, the Council in May has focused on the political, humanitarian and security situations in Syria. As Special Envoy De Mistura has stressed, there are three interlinked elements needed for peace in Syria: stopping the fighting, improving humanitarian access and engaging in political negotiations to bring about a political transition. Yet as we discussed earlier this month, the cessation of hostilities has given way to violence, and the regime has disregarded international agreements on reducing the violence and providing humanitarian access, as outlined in resolutions 2254 (2015) and 2268 (2016), effectively undermining the conditions needed for political negotiations.

While all sides have contributed to the return to violence, the military escalation and indiscriminate attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, such as hospitals, schools and markets, are largely attributable to the actions of the Al-Assad regime, and, as attacks continue, the regime has restricted humanitarian access and blocked aid, including medical supplies to people in desperate need. It has deliberately targeted first responders, health-care workers and medical facilities. Resolution 2254 (2015) calls for rapid, safe and unhindered access throughout the country. Resolution 2139 (2014) specifically forbids the removal of medicines and medical supplies from aid convoys, but, as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reports, that is routine throughout the country.

For our part, we will continue to urge all parties to comply fully across the country and specifically call for an end to the Al-Assad regime's continued offensive attacks in Aleppo, Latakia and elsewhere, as well as its besieging of towns and obstruction of humanitarian access. The United States has worked with Special Envoy De Mistura and, in particular, with the Russian Federation to reaffirm the cessation of hostilities across the country, and specifically that the parties agree to recommit to the truce in Aleppo and the Damascus suburbs. Yet the violence has continued, as we can see. Secretary Kerry has raised these concerns with Foreign Minister Lavrov and urged him to press the regime to cease at once air strikes against opposition forces and innocent civilians. Still, as we saw yesterday, there are reports that numerous civilians were killed as buildings around the national hospital in Idlib

were struck. Again, at the last meeting in Vienna, all members of the International Syria Support Group urged full compliance of the parties with the terms of the cessation.

That leads me to several points that I would like to make with regard to our recent meeting on health care in armed conflict (S/PV.7685), which provided an opportunity to further examine the human consequences of attacks in Syria and elsewhere. The increasing trend of violence against medical personnel, facilities and transportation is clear in Syria. The attacks are so frequent that, as Under-Secretary-General Stephen O'Brien has told us, proximity to a hospital is now perceived by neighbours to be a threat to their own safety. As we noted in that meeting, over 725 doctors have been killed and over 350 attacks on medical facilities have taken place, the vast majority of which have been committed by the regime, although the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has also directed multiple bombings of medical centres. We strongly condemn ISIL's current offensive in Aleppo, which threatens thousands of civilians and has also targeted medical facilities and staff.

Those issues are now covered in resolution 2286 (2016), in which the Council demands protection for medical and humanitarian personnel, hospitals and other medical facilities. The resolution also emphasizes the responsibilities of States to comply with international law, end impunity and ensure accountability for those responsible, and urges States to conduct investigations into such violations. We feel strongly about those principles, wherever such violence occurs, be it in Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan or elsewhere.

Turning to our meeting last week with the African Union (S/PV.7694), we welcome such opportunities to examine how best the two organizations can work together to achieve our common goals. Given the large percentage of United Nations troops deployed in Africa, coupled with the fact that over half of those serving in the continent are themselves African, we have much to gain from enhanced communication between the two bodies. We know that the AU can be a particularly effective partner in responding to the security crises in its own backyard, including those unfortunate cases in which offensive military operations are required. The Security Council and AU Peace and Security Council have common priorities and agree on many issues, but we also need to deal with the differences that can emerge inside each of our respective Councils. We need

to be better at responding quickly and cohesively to the political drivers and roots of conflict.

Before I conclude, I would like to quickly mention our work and the Secretary-General selection process, as I know that many Member States are eager for news of the Council's plans. Under your leadership, Sir, we held an any-other-business session last week in which we began to discuss the next steps in fulfilling our important responsibilities to select the next head of the Organization. We look forward to further discussions under France's presidency in June to finalize the procedures for our upcoming deliberations.

In conclusion, I thank you, Sir, for your steady and professional leadership of the Council this month.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, permit me, Sir, to congratulate you on having convened this wrap-up session in line with the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507) and for having distributed a concept note with proposals addressed to the members of the Security Council to guide their statements. As I have said before, Uruguay values these formal wrap-up sessions because they offer the possibility of placing on the record the positions of the 15 members on the month's work, thereby contributing to giving the Security Council's action greater transparency and accountability.

Notwithstanding, Uruguay also attaches particular importance to interaction with the membership because we believe that it is always relevant to hold such wrap-up sessions in the Toledo format or any other informal format. Having said that, I also believe that the formal format is very appropriate this month, when the Security Council has the duty to share with all Members of the United Nations various topics of the greatest importance.

I will attempt to not be repetitive in saying what our Mission has already stated publicly in the Chamber. I therefore want to begin by highlighting the positive aspects of what we have this month.

First, for the second consecutive month, we have seen the lifting of a sanctions regime — the past month in the Côte d'Ivoire and this month in Liberia. That aspect of the Council's work must not be undermined, because the imposition of sanctions is one of the tools available to the Security Council, but its use must be limited to the time until the situation that called for its use has reverted to normal. In that regard, I was

pleased to witness this process from the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1572 (2004) concerning Côte d'Ivoire, which was dissolved on 28 April. I also take this opportunity to congratulate my colleague from Ukraine, who chaired the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) concerning Liberia, and who said in his statement in the meeting (S/PV.7695) at which we adopted resolution 2288 (2016), which dissolved the Committee, that it has now been inscribed in the annals of history.

Another positive aspect was the adoption of resolution 2286 (2016) on 3 May. That was a positive response to an extremely negative reality, which concerns us greatly, especially when we observe that there is a systematic pattern of attacks and destruction of medical facilities, their staff and means of transport; attacks on health-care workers and patients; and a systematic disruption of the supply of medications and the convoys that are sent to provide those medical supplies. Those violations of international humanitarian law are nothing but war crimes, and the Security Council should therefore address the issue in a resolution. I understand that not just the outcome — resolution 2286 (2016) — was a positive, but the process was also positive because it involved five non-permanent members as penholders who worked to address a particularly relevant and urgent issue.

Allow me to briefly address a couple of issues that, from the point of view of working methods, could be improved. On 23 May, Security Council members met with African Union members informally in the morning and formally in the afternoon in order to address the programme of work agreed on between the parties. The issues to be addressed were African issues. In that regard, my delegation understands that the Security Council is acting appropriately by attaching priority to the issues that the African Union wants to include on the agenda. That should be the approach to working with a partner who wishes to transfer to the Security Council issues that are priorities for its organization and region. My delegation supported the request of the African Union to include the topic of Western Sahara on the agenda, but unfortunately that was not possible owing to the obstruction by some members of the Security Council who refuse to consider the issue.

With regard to the selection process of the Secretary-General, my delegation recognizes the leadership Egypt has provided during its presidency on this matter, in particular by holding the coordinators' meeting on

18 May and on other issues that were considered by members of the Security Council on 26 May. While there are some differences among members of the Security Council about different aspects of the process, I understand that it is very important to begin as quickly as possible holding Security Council meetings with candidates who are interested in the position to see if the consensus achieved during our consultations last week holds up.

Finally, I want to underscore Uruguay's concern about the two terrorist attacks perpetrated in May against the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), which led to the death of Blue Helmets. MINUSMA is the peacekeeping operation that has had the most casualties from direct attacks. We have repeatedly called it the most dangerous of all the deployed missions. Unfortunately, the Security Council is accustomed to expressing itself about terrorist attacks through press communiqués, but in this case it was a terrorist attack against a United Nations peacekeeping mission.

During its mission to Mali in March, the Security Council was able to see the precarious conditions under which this peacekeeping Mission carries out its work. For the reasons already mentioned and for having been the direct target of terrorist attacks in May, I propose that we not run out the deadlines that we proposed for June, but rather that we speed up the timetable to adopt a new resolution on MINUSMA's mandate, in particular everything that enables it to increase its defence capability in order to prevent more loss of lives among our peacekeepers.

Mr. González de Linares Palou (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to congratulate Ambassador Aboulatta and his entire team for their remarkable and effective work in managing the issues of the Security Council during this month, which has had a very heavy workload. I also thank him for issuing the concept note, which allows us to focus on the issues of this wrap-up meeting.

These formal wrap-up sessions are very useful. We support them and believe that it is a good idea to hold them as part of our ongoing support for transparency in this Council. We also support the holding of informal and interactive meetings of the Security Council with non-member States because that also allows us to enrich ourselves with their comments on our own work.

I will concentrate on one of the areas of the Council's work in the month of May that the presidency has specifically highlighted, that of resolution 2286 (2016) on medical assistance in armed conflicts. I will also make a brief reference to the briefing on the challenges to security in the Sahel (see S/PV.7699), which my delegation organized together with the Egyptian presidency just a few days ago.

With regard to 2286 (2016) resolution, which was adopted by consensus and sponsored by 86 States Members of the Organization, indeed deserves to be highlighted. It is the first Security Council resolution to deal exclusively with medical assistance in armed conflicts, and its adoption shows that the Security Council is responding to a very painful reality. In the year and a half since Spain joined the Council, there has not been a single month during which there has not been one attack against doctors or hospitals and a country in conflict. Resolution 2286 (2016) not only condemns attacks against doctors and hospitals in armed conflict and calls for compliance with international law in the area, it also urges States to investigate such violations of international humanitarian law and to bring the guilty to justice. It also deals with issues such as preventing attacks, the importance of training and the need to gather objective and reliable information on the attacks against doctors and hospitals in countries in conflict. The resolution also calls upon the Secretary-General to request and make recommendations to prevent these events and to inform the Security Council at least once a year on the implementation of this resolution. The adoption of the resolution sends a message of support from the Security Council to doctors and health-care workers who work in situations of armed conflict and day after day are fulfilling their missions under extremely difficult conditions.

With regard to the new methods of work of the Security Council, this resolution has established a new precedent in the way that initiatives are proposed and texts are negotiated. For the first time, the initiative of the leadership and the coordination of the process was assumed by five members. They are all elected members belonging to the five regional groups. Therefore, it was not only an innovative process, but also a model process in terms of consensus, transparency and the inclusive nature of it. It was an example of the success of the Security Council's initiatives and efforts when it works in a constructive way and as a team.

Climate change is not an abstract problem or one for the future; it is scourge that is determining the living conditions of millions of people throughout the world today. It is pushing specific countries and people, for example, Somalia, into a situation of environmental, economic and social stress, and it has a direct impact on international peace and security. It is a horizontal and structural challenge that we must confront with all of our resources.

In light of the aforementioned, I turn to the briefing on the security challenges in the Sahel that took place last Thursday (S/PV.7699). That meeting was a clear example of the way in which the Council should address threats to peace and security concerning situations on its agenda through an integrated, holistic approach, including, for example, in cases such as the Sahel, desertification as a key element in understanding the reality of the situation in the Sahel. The Security Council must therefore be appropriately informed of all challenges to peace and security in all corners of the world. That is the only way in which, together, we can improve our most fundamental function — prevention.

I conclude by reiterating, Mr. President, my appreciation for your focused and effective presidency of the Council and to wish every success to the French presidency in the upcoming month.

Mr. Okamura (Japan): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on a very successful presidency during the month of May.

First, let me touch upon the Security Council mission to the Horn of Africa. At such an important juncture in Somalia's Statebuilding, the mission was both timely and beneficial. I thank the Egyptian presidency for taking the initiative to organize that visit. With regard to the political process, the most pressing issue is the electoral process. During the meeting in Mogadishu, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud promised to hold elections in August in order to build a united Somalia. In keeping with his word, he issued a presidential decree regarding the elections on 22 May. It was a very encouraging development and demonstrated the difference the Council can make on the ground when it visits the countries on its agenda.

The Council should continue to do all that it can in supporting the Somali-led transition process. In Somalia, after more than 20 years of the absence of a central Government, it may be difficult for the people to really recognize the legitimacy of the Government.

Choosing their leaders through elections does not necessarily mean accepting the State's authority. The Government should provide security and administrative and social services to the people as peace dividends in order to gain their trust. In following the formula of Abraham Lincoln, the Somalis have built a Government of the people and by the people, but it remains a big challenge to turn it into a Government for the people.

Above all, we need to urgently establish a strong security sector. If State authority is not extended sufficiently to the areas liberated from Al-Shabaab, power vacuums will be created and terrorists will take advantage of them. Strong administrative institutions also need to be firmly in place. The Federal Government in Mogadishu will then have authority with substance. Only a Government with strong institutions will allow the Council to consider a possible exit strategy for the African Union Mission in Somalia in the long run.

Japan will highlight the importance of institution-building in the open debate on peacebuilding in Africa during its Council presidency in July.

On 3 May, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2286 (2016) on health care in armed conflict, with 85 sponsors. It was our great honour to co-author the resolution, together with Spain, New Zealand, Egypt and Uruguay. A few days after the adoption, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) sent an open letter to all United Nations Member States. In the letter, the ICRC welcomed the adoption of the resolution and urged Member States to reaffirm the importance of compliance with international humanitarian law and to take action in accordance with resolution 2286 (2016). We are glad to hear of the positive reaction on the part of the ICRC. The situations on the ground in Syria and other countries, including Yemen, Afghanistan, Libya and Mali, are still grim. We must remain vigilant and urge all parties to conflict to abide by the resolution.

In closing, I would like to commend you, Mr. President, and the entire Egyptian team for your splendid, very well organized and skilful work.

(spoke in French)

I take this opportunity to wish every success to Ambassador François Delattre during his presidency next month. He can rely on my team and particularly on me in ensuring the best outcome of the Council's work.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): Let me begin, Mr. President, with warm congratulations and thanks

to you and to your whole team for a very successful presidency. Once again, it has been a busy month. I am therefore glad that you have made time for this wrap-up session so that we may capture the lessons learned from the past few weeks and share them transparently in this open meeting. I very much agree with our colleagues from Uruguay and Spain who said that it would be even more effective if the session were to be interactive and informal.

In keeping with the useful concept note that the President circulated, I will focus on three points today: the Council's visit to Somalia; the situation in Syria; and our work on appointing the next Secretary-General. I believe that all three are examples of the need for us to take an action-oriented approach so that we can exert pressure and make a real difference in the world and foster progress in a way that goes beyond our usual business of adopting resolutions and products. Let me take each briefly in turn.

Our visit to Somalia formed part of a good month for cooperation with regional bodies, joining the visits from both the African Union Peace and Security Council and the European Union Peace and Security Committee to New York. Those are important load-bearing relationships that we must continue to invest in and to strengthen for the future. But the visit to Somalia also demonstrated something else. It reaffirmed that Security Council trips to countries on our agenda can have a positive, tangible influence. It reaffirmed that we speak with a powerful voice when we are united and when we urge progress in the name of peace and security. As our Japanese colleague just said, we saw that when the Somali President approved the electoral model to be used in this year's crucial elections shortly after our departure. In doing so, he overcame an important hurdle to the democratic, representative future that the people of Somalia so urgently deserve. I therefore encourage future presidencies to mirror the example set by the Egyptian presidency and arrange more visits to countries on our agenda.

If Somalia shows how we have got it right this month, sadly, Syria typifies the opposite. Following the powerful debate on health care workers in armed conflict (S/PV.7685), it was right that the Council met to discuss the deteriorating situation in Aleppo. In doing so, we helped contribute to the public pressure that eventually brought about a recommitment to the cessation of hostilities. But even that simple act was

far too difficult to achieve. Even as Aleppo burned, the Council took too long to agree to hold a simple meeting.

Actions outside the Chamber — such as removing medicine from convoys, stopping urgent medical evacuations from besieged areas, or denying basic aid to those most in need — speak louder than the words within it. Those are the actions of the Syrian regime, and they are deafening in comparison to the words of the Security Council. So our response must not be limited to calling another meeting. It cannot be even more words. That is why we fully support the call from the International Syria Support Group for air drops to besieged areas, should access not be granted by land by tomorrow. That deadline is looming fast. Should the regime continue to prevent aid from reaching those who need it, we will all have to work to turn the Support Group's pledge into action.

My final point is about our work on the appointment of the next Secretary-General. I would like to pay tribute to you, Mr. President, for beginning informal discussions on how the Council will conduct that vital selection process. The General Assembly hearings have set a high bar for us to follow. There are huge expectations, both inside and outside this building. I therefore look forward to a Council process that builds on the Assembly's excellent work on the hearings last month and next month, too, no doubt. In doing so, I believe we will build on the steps taken this month towards fostering a more open and responsive Security Council. This has not been about votes, negotiations or discussions, but about showing that we are in the business of getting things done. I look forward to our efforts continuing, both under the French presidency and others to come.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the entire Egyptian delegation for providing an environment conducive to effective and efficient work by the Council in the month of May. Your team's highly professional efforts have been a hallmark of the Egyptian presidency and deserve high praise.

At the outset, the Ukrainian delegation would like to welcome the return of the formal wrap-up meeting at the end of the month. In our opinion, it is an important instrument in the Council's toolkit for ensuring transparency in its work, something that is appreciated both by the United Nations membership and civil society. May was not an easy month, full of difficult discussions, important negotiations and

events requiring the Council's urgent attention. It was a month of some historic decisions, one of them being the lifting of sanctions on Liberia and the termination of the related Security Council Committee, a case where I felt very pleased to be losing my job as its Chair. It was a month when from the very first day Council members demonstrated the ability to reach agreements and find solutions to issues on which very different and sometimes opposing views exist. That is not to say that we found a magic formula for resolving differences, but to point out that if and when the political will is present, the Council is very likely to deliver a result.

Exactly four weeks ago, the Council adopted resolution 2286 (2016), on the protection of medical and humanitarian personnel in armed conflicts. The fact that 85 States Members of the United Nations sponsored the resolution emphasized very vividly that the subject requires urgent attention on the part of the international community. That is nowhere more apparent than in Syria, where medical facilities and health-care workers have been repeatedly and systematically targeted. Over the past month, the Syrian issue has consistently been on the Council's agenda. In our view, that consistency is a sure sign that things in that country are not moving in the right direction. The international community is anxious to hear and welcome news that humanitarian assistance has been delivered to one or another Syrian town or village, and it appears that for the moment that is the best we can hope for. What a sorry state of affairs — especially when we are reminded that we are talking about a conflict that according to various counts may have already taken the lives of as many 500,000 people.

At February's wrap-up session (S/PV.7633), my delegation spoke of a glimmer of hope that seemed to have appeared for the Syrian people. Three months later, we can say that the glimmer has been all but extinguished; last night's bombings of Idlib are gruesome proof of that. This is not the occasion to point fingers about it, but what I would like to single out is the issue of accountability. Accountability is the point of reference in resolution 2286 (2016), and it would be a challenge to find anyone generally opposed to bringing those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law to account. While we are fully aware of the political sensitivities surrounding the whole Syrian political negotiation process, we are nonetheless convinced that if for the time being accountability is not about to be achieved through proper legal processes,

transparency is the very least we can provide. In that regard, a very controversial picture emerged last Friday from the briefing on the humanitarian situation in Syria (S/PV.7701). The Council would do well to modify its approach to its consideration of the ongoing conflict in Syria.

I would be remiss if I failed to commend the Egyptian presidency for spearheading open debates on the topics of countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism (S/PV.7690) and cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union (see S/PV.7694), and for leading the Council's visit to Somalia. All in all, Ukraine welcomes the strong regional, Chapter VIII-focused edge of the Egyptian presidency. Besides the meeting with the African Union Peace and Security Council, that also relates to the first ever joint consultative meeting with the League of Arab States.

As a country with European integration at the heart of its foreign and internal policy, Ukraine also greatly appreciated the useful informal exchange between the Council and the Political and Security Committee of the European Union (EU). In that regard, we also look forward to next month's EU briefing. Since all of those important topics have already been eloquently addressed by other speakers, I will not dwell on them, or on my visit last week to the Central African Republic as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic, about which I am planning to report to the Council later.

In keeping with your suggestion to focus statements on key subjects, Mr. President, I would like touch on the issue of the appointment of the next Secretary-General. There have been several discussions on the issue this month among Council members at various levels. We believe that those deliberations have been very useful but perhaps somewhat slow when it comes to deciding on the Council's next steps. Given the importance of the matter, the large number of candidates and the ever-present time pressure, the Ukrainian delegation would like to underline that we are strongly in favour of holding the Council's meetings with candidates in a timely fashion — provided that the candidates express an interest in that — and of organizing initial straw-poll rounds without any delays. We are of the opinion that for the Council to postpone taking action can only result in its unnecessary imposition on itself of time constraints that it would be better to avoid.

In closing, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, and your team on the successful completion of your presidency, and to assure the incoming French presidency of our full support.

Mr. Shen Bo (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China would like to express its appreciation to the Egyptian presidency for guiding the Council smoothly and effectively through the month of May. We congratulate you, Ambassador Aboulatta, and your team. And we wish the incoming French presidency all the best for the month of June.

African issues have been a focus of this month's work. A Security Council mission visited Somalia, Kenya and Egypt, in a reflection of the Council's strong commitment to finding a political solution to the question of Somalia and promoting peace and stability on the African continent. China appreciates the holding, on Egypt's initiative, of an open debate (see S/PV.7694) on the question of cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in the area of peace and security, and the adoption of an accompanying presidential statement (S/PRST/2016/8). The meeting evaluated the successful experiences of the past decade of cooperation between the two parties, consolidated international consensus on the issue and further enhanced support to the cause of peace and security in Africa. China welcomes the road map for the African Peace and Security Architecture from 2016 to 2020, and hopes that the United Nations and the African Union will strengthen their cooperation in the area of peace and security.

We support the African approach of African solutions to African problems, as well as the African Union's efforts to resolve differences through peaceful means such as dialogue, negotiation, good offices and mediation.

The international community should provide greater support for capacity-building of the African Union and its collective security mechanism and help Africa to achieve durable peace, prosperity and development as early as possible.

Terrorism is a common security threat faced by humankind. Counter-terrorism has consistently been a focus of the Council's work. China welcomes the fact that this month, at the initiative of Egypt, the Council held an open debate on counter-terrorism (see S/PV.7690) that highlighted the importance of the international community's coordination and cooperation in fighting

terrorism, creating international synergies. The international community should form a united front on counter-terrorism, and full play must be given to the central coordinating role of the United Nations and the Security Council. In the fight against terrorism, we should abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and adhere to standard criteria. This fight must not be linked to a specific ethnicity or religion.

The focus should be on halting the trans-border movement of terrorists and cutting off their financial resources and their supplies of weapons. Attention must also be given to effectively fighting terrorist activities conducted via the Internet and social media.

On the question of the Middle East, at present the conflict between Palestine and Israel continues, as the peace negotiations remain deadlocked. China is deeply concerned about the situation. As a fundamental issue having direct bearing on peace in the Middle East, the question of Palestine must not be overlooked and certainly not forgotten. To preserve the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people is the joint responsibility of the international community. More robust efforts are required to push forward the peace process, on the political front, and to promote reconstruction, on the economic front. The key to breaking the current impasse is to jumpstart the peace process.

China welcomes the international community's efforts in terms of good offices and welcomes the new approaches proposed in that regard. The international support group will hold a meeting of foreign ministers on 3 June in Paris. China hopes that this will inject fresh vitality into our efforts to find a solution. China's Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, will head the Chinese delegation to the meeting and work with the rest of the international community to facilitate the peace process in the Middle East and help find a solution to the question of Palestine and Israel at an early date.

Mr. Taula (New Zealand): We congratulate you, Mr. President, and your Mission for your efficient and professional leadership of the Council in May. We thank you also for the concept note that you provided for this session.

We were very pleased to participate in the mission to Kenya, Somalia and Egypt. In Somalia in particular, as other speakers have noted, we saw immediate, positive impact from the Council's face-to-face engagement with

the President, regional leaders and other stakeholders in this critical period as arrangements for the elections were being finalized. We welcome the decree issued three days after the visit by the President setting out the electoral process, and we urge all Somalis to work within those parameters in re-establishing a representative Government in Somalia.

We see Council missions such as these as a very valuable tool to advance peace and security objectives. They can also assist the Council in meeting its conflict-prevention responsibilities.

That is why New Zealand has been a strong supporter of such visits during our term, including to Guinea-Bissau, where Council engagement alongside regional and international stakeholders remains critical, and to Burundi, which we would have liked to have seen the Council visit earlier, when, we feel, quiet diplomacy could have had more of a chance of shaping developments.

Visiting missions take time and money, including from United Nations mission budgets, so we should use them judiciously. We should be flexible about timing and configuration. In some cases, we do not see the need for all 15 Council members to travel, necessarily, in order to convey the views of this body, especially in conflict-prevention situations. We think that the Council's visit to Timor-Leste in 2012 was a good example of a mini-mission. It was led by South Africa; six members, all elected, took part in that visit.

We face major conflict-prevention challenges in the year ahead, including in the Great Lakes, and we should be flexible about how we use the Council's tools to address those issues.

We were very pleased that the Council hosted the African Union for the annual joint consultative meeting last week. The meetings were symbolic, coming at the 10-year anniversary, and continuing to deepen the exchanges between the two Councils is an even more critical issue for us. We thought that the discussion in Addis earlier this year on the way back from Bujumbura was a very helpful informal exchange that enhanced the Councils' mutual understanding. It was highly topical, and delegations were ready to engage on the core issues.

As discussed last week, we think that more regular discussions, including teleconferences between the presidencies of the two Councils, would be one useful and low-cost way to maintain those linkages and, more

importantly, to support a shared analysis of conflicts and how we can both best address them. There are other ways in which we can work better together, including through joint visits, and we would be happy to discuss those ideas further.

The month began on a very encouraging note, with the adoption of resolution 2286 (2016), as others have noted. The resolution condemned attacks on health-care workers and health-care facilities. It recalled key international humanitarian law and the principles of distinction and precaution, and the prohibition against indiscriminate attacks. And, importantly, it requested the Secretary-General to brief the Council annually on the implementation of the resolution.

We would like to reflect briefly on some of the working methods behind the adoption of the resolution, to which Spain referred to as well. New Zealand was very pleased to play a significant role, working together with our partners in the Council, in developing the resolution, which was supported by all 15 members and sponsored by 85 Member States.

Key stakeholders, including the International Committee of the Red Cross and Médecins Sans Frontières, were closely engaged, as were stakeholders not on the Council. We see the development of this resolution, over many months, as a strong model for inclusive and considered discussion and decision-making. New Zealand would like to see this approach taken more often by the Council to improve its outcomes.

Finally, in the area of working methods, I would like to comment on the discussions under way on the appointment process for the chairs of subsidiary organs. These issues are of great interest to us, because they are important for the way the Council works and have implications for the wider United Nations membership and for all States that will serve as elected members on the Council. It is elected members that serve as chairs of the Council's subsidiary organs, including the sanctions committees. The appointment process of these chairing roles is notoriously opaque, and we believe that this should change.

The Security Council elections will be held next month, and the earlier timing provides us with more time to reflect on which members are best suited to chair which subsidiary bodies. And, most importantly, this allows more time to consult with the new members.

Accordingly, New Zealand is a strong advocate of all Council members being involved in this process, not just the permanent members, and we propose that successive Presidents of the Security Council are best placed to facilitate the chair allocation process after the incoming members have been elected.

Overall, New Zealand wants to see more inclusive decision-making, less micromanagement and less control in the hands of few, and better efforts to prepare new chairs for their roles. Given the importance of these issues, and working methods discussions more generally, we would see value in holding regular briefings for interested Member States on the work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, as I think was mentioned in the presidential statement adopted after the open debate late last year.

In closing, let me say that we all benefit from greater transparency and greater engagement with the United Nations membership as a whole.

Mrs. Adnin (Malaysia): I wish to begin by commending you and your team, Mr. President, for the excellent organization and conduct of the Council's work this month. Based on that alone, I must say that the Egyptian presidency has been a resounding success. I wish also to thank you for having organized this formal note 507 briefing. This particular format affords the Council an important opportunity for its members, particularly the elected members, to place on record their views on and assessment of the work and workings of the Council, which other formats do not. We continue to believe that Council members should reach an understanding on striking a balance between interactivity, which the informal briefing, or Toledo format, allows, and the need for a formal record, which the present format affords. In line with the concept paper, I intend to focus on a few of the five issues suggested.

I wish first to reflect on the Council's recent work on Syria, specifically on the humanitarian front. We wish to underscore that the Syrian Government has a full obligation to secure the safety, security and welfare of its citizens. The Government must also provide and facilitate humanitarian access to besieged and hard-to-reach areas, particularly to the areas under its control. As such, we, alongside other Council members, remain appalled that, despite our collective best efforts, humanitarian access, especially to besieged and hard-

to-reach areas, remains pitifully limited. Bureaucratic delays, facilitation failures or the wilful obstruction of eight convoys by the Syrian Government and other parties of the conflict are all deplorable and completely unacceptable. It is frustrating, as every passing day can mean life or death to the people in besieged areas. They cannot be forsaken. While the 17 May communiqué of the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) provides for the activation of air bridges and drops by tomorrow should the situation with regard to access does not improve, we must underscore that it should not substitute for land access. In that regard, we call on all ISSG members, particularly those with influence on the Syrian parties, to continue pushing for land access.

It is fitting that the tenth anniversary of informal consultations between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) was commemorated with an open debate (see S/PV.7694) on 24 May that focused on the way forward for United Nations-African Union (AU) relations and the future of the African Peace and Security Architecture. The recent reviews of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, peace operations and resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, have provided impetus for a renewed and reinvigorated relationship between the Security Council and the PSC. Malaysia reaffirms its support for S/PRST/2016/8, which we believe frames and paves the way for future engagement between the Security Council and the AU PSC.

In line with our common interests to have more substantive discussions that could lead to more concrete outcomes, Malaysia believes that both the Council and the AU PSC can further improve their working methods when convening informal consultations. Specifically, we believe that certain proposals floated during the May consultations, including on the agenda of the joint consultations, with emphasis on an assessment of the implementation of the Security Council-AU PSC communiqué would be useful for continuity and coordination purposes. In addition, following the example of the way in which informal consultations between the Council and the European Union Commission are undertaken, we are of the view that the practice by which each side proposes a certain number of topics it wishes to discuss would avoid unproductive procedural wrangling and afford more time for substantive exchanges.

Turning to more working methods-related issues, my delegation wishes to reiterate its appreciation to

Ambassador Motohide Yoshikawa, who will be leaving very soon, and to the delegation of Japan for their sterling work in leading the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. We fully support the Informal Working Group's proposed work plan for 2016 and are pleased with the progress of consultations on the first item of the work plan — on transitional arrangements for newly elected or incoming Council members. Given that, in a few weeks' time, the General Assembly is scheduled to elect five non-permanent members of the Council for the term 2017-2018, the proposal to involve the new members in the Council's work as early as possible is welcome. At the same time, we believe that the process of identifying new Chairs of subsidiary bodies should also begin early. In that regard, we support the proposal for incoming members to be fully consulted and for the Security Council presidency to take a much larger role in that process. Ideally, the presidency should lead in a way that could introduce greater transparency and inclusiveness in the Council's work.

In conclusion, I again congratulate you, Mr. President, and your excellent team on a job well done. The Egyptian presidency was conducted very efficiently and professionally, which we greatly appreciate. To Ambassador Delattre and the delegation of France, I wish to reaffirm the full cooperation and support of my delegation during his presidency and to wish them all the very best. We are confident that France will successfully guide the Council through what looks to be a very hectic June.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, on behalf of the entire delegation of Senegal, I would like to warmly congratulate you, Mr. President, and your team for the professionalism and efficiency with which you steered the work of the Security Council in the month of May.

The Egyptian presidency was certainly busy and productive, and at times highly paced, both in terms of the strategic discussions and the practical actions taken by the Security Council. There were times for reflection, with thematic debates on how to deconstruct terrorist ideology and rhetoric (see S/PV.7690), on cooperation in the areas of peace and security with the African Union (see S/PV.7694) and on the security challenges in the Sahel region (see S/PV.7699). There was also moments of action in the Council. At the initiative of Egypt, the Council travelled to East Africa — to Nairobi, Mogadishu and Cairo. It also reviewed several

mandates and adopted five resolutions, four of which concerned African issues.

I would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for your concept note on issues to orient our exchange today, namely, on Syria, Somalia, the counter-terrorism fight, cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union and protecting medical staff in armed conflict. The elements to the press that you issued on Friday, on the situation in Guinea-Bissau, and our adoption this morning of resolution 2290 (2016) attest to the crucial importance that your presidency has attached to African issues.

The tenth annual session of consultations between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council stood out among this organ's highpoints in the month of May. They were the first such consultations held since the issuance of the report (see S/2015/446) of the High-level Independent Panel on Peacekeeping Operations, the Secretary-General's own report (S/2015/632) on the implementation of the Panel's recommendations and the report on peacebuilding (see S/2015/490). This year's session made it possible to renew the commitment of the two organizations to pursue their engagement — a development that gives rise to much hope.

In addition, in considering the situations in Somalia and Burundi, the Council and the PSC held discussions about the need to adapt strategies and methods to the changing situation. Its informal consultations and dialogue made it possible to reflect on redefining priorities and preventing conflicts through cooperation between the two bodies. A key outcome of those consultations was the importance of orienting their cooperation — and thus their annual consultations — towards a more pragmatic approach based on the actions to be undertaken by them in relation to specific challenges.

It is important to identify priorities, with concrete deadlines and achievable objectives, that both organizations can meet, including with regard to strategic cooperation. As appropriate, that should make it possible for us to align regional cooperation and the triangular dialogue among the Security Council, the Secretariat and the troop-contributing countries so as to provide more coherence and effectiveness to the Council's work. Given the high number and complexity of the issues on the the agendas of both organizations, the question arises as to whether we should review the

consultations format, either to hold it over two days or to convene two sessions per year.

Another issue that we should consider is that of medical personnel in situations of armed conflict, concerning which the Security Council adopted resolution 2286 (2016). I recall, *inter alia*, General Assembly resolution 69/132, concerning global health and foreign policy, which my country had the honour to submit to the Assembly in December 2015. The resolution urges all parties to conflict to take the measures necessary to prevent and suppress attacks on medical personnel and health infrastructure. It also requests States to ensure accountability for the perpetrators of such acts, because no one should shoot at an ambulance.

At the same time, my delegation understands the problem of providing medical care in armed conflict beyond ensuring the protection and delivery of medical humanitarian assistance. Regarding the harmful impact of the recent Ebola epidemic on peacebuilding processes in the affected countries, it is urgent that we be able to keep the peace in the wake of emerging challenges undermining the Council's actions in seeking lasting peace. We dare hope that the report of the Secretary-General that has been requested in the resolution will offer an opportunity to launch an in-depth reflection on the issue of health care in armed conflict.

We commend the role of the Security Council in the process of electing the new Secretary-General, which the Egyptian delegation has sought to clarify. We are certain that the presidencies to come will effectively and efficiently organize straw polls and interactive dialogues with all candidates who desire to so engage.

To conclude, I reiterate the congratulations of the Senegalese delegation to you, Sir, on your leadership this month, and assure Ambassador François Delattre of France and his team of our support. We wish them every success as they prepare to assume the presidency of the Security Council for June, which will be extremely busy.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Egypt.

At the outset, I should like to thank everyone for the kind words addressed to the Egyptian presidency during the month of May, and I express our deep gratitude to all members of the Security Council for the support provided to Egypt throughout this month.

May was a busy month, during which the Council addressed extremely important issues that have a direct impact on international peace and security. The main purpose of this wrap-up session is to draw lessons from dealing with issues that have an impact on international peace and security. We must build on the lessons learned from our working methods during this month and evaluate the effectiveness of the Council's activities in terms of transparency, scope and objectivity. In that regard, the Egyptian presidency distributed an informal concept paper in which we proposed focusing on a limited number of issues during this meeting and addressing them in both their procedural and substantive aspects. The aim of this exercise was to affirm the important relation between those two aspects in increasing the effectiveness of the Council's work. Accordingly, I will now focus on the following topics.

First, the unanimous adoption of resolution 2286 (2015), with its focus on health care in armed conflict, is an indicator of the important and constructive role that the elected members of the Council can play. That initiative, which was launched by five elected members of the Council — Japan, Spain, New Zealand, Uruguay and Egypt — addressed the increased attacks against health-care facilities and health-care workers in conflict. The broad support for the resolution, with the sponsorship of 85 Member States, reflects the ability of the Council to reach new heights in facing emerging challenges that threaten international peace and security. It also indicates the Council's ability to mobilize support for relevant resolutions that enjoy legitimacy and acceptance in the international community. Accordingly, that improves the credibility of the Council and points to its seriousness in addressing and dealing with the perpetrators of such attacks.

I would also like to draw attention to the unique way in which we shaped that initiative. It was the first time that five members of the Council collectively developed a draft resolution in a measured way, with openness, transparency and inclusivity in dealing with all members of the Council, all interested parties and actors that are not Council members, all with the aim of enriching the content and in reaching unanimity. That is different from the usual practice, whereby a single member presents a draft resolution without enough time to hold consultations on it.

Secondly, the open ministerial debate (see S/PV.7690) on the theme of countering the narratives

and ideologies of terrorism reiterated the importance of expanding our approach to combating terrorism. It is no longer enough or effective for international efforts to focus on security aspects alone, for this is a phenomenon that has gained ground in all societies, regardless of their level of development. The participation of representatives from the Al Azhar Islamic Research Academy and the Microsoft Corporation reflected the importance of the Council's openness to the perspectives of the real actors and players in the area of countering the narratives of terrorists. In addition, the participation of more than 70 speakers in the open debate reflected the extreme importance and concern that the international community attaches to the topic.

The summary in presidential statement S/PRST/2016/6, which was the outcome of the open debate, requests the Counter-Terrorism Committee to submit a proposal to the Security Council by 30 April 2017 for a comprehensive international framework to counter the narratives by extremists. That fact constitutes an affirmation of the Council's seriousness and of its political will to build on the broad interest in the topic in a practical manner. That is a challenge to Member States to work in a unified manner and to show their commitment in fulfilling that task. In that regard, we call upon the Counter-Terrorism Committee, which Egypt is honoured to chair, to begin immediately implementing the task mandated to it and to consult closely with States, organizations and the relevant parties to allow the Security Council to consider the framework in all its aspects after the Committee has finalized it. That will enhance the credibility of the Security Council and its resolutions and illustrate the international consensus on the issue.

Thirdly, many briefings and consultations were held this month on the situation in Syria. The most important one was the briefing held on 4 May (see S/PV.7687), which was unique because it did not include the adoption of a draft resolution on the situation in Syria, as had been previously agreed. Interventions by Member States, which included the participation of the Syrian delegation, revealed points of both convergence and divergence with regard to violations of the ceasefire by Syrian and regional parties. While that does not represent the ideal manner for the Council to act, it nevertheless serves to highlight the clarity and realism with which the crisis and its magnitude are described. Despite that — or perhaps as a result of it — the Council was able to issue two press statements in which

it reaffirmed its rejection and condemnation of the targeting civilians and civilian structures and its call for a cessation of all hostilities against humanitarian and medical personnel. We also reaffirmed our condemnation of terrorism.

The main principles that bring us together — in line with international law, international humanitarian law and our resolutions, without selectivity — are sufficient to enable us to agree upon the main principles for resolving the situation in Syria and ending the suffering of the Syrian people. In that regard, I would like once again to reiterate Egypt's support for the International Syria Support Group and to encourage the Group to lead the crucial, necessary coordination between the United States and the Russian Federation under their joint leadership.

Fourthly, the time chosen for the Council's visit to Somalia, Kenya and Egypt in May reflected the importance of timing of the Council's field visits. The visit coincided with the tension related to the stalemate in the Somali Parliament in adopting the electoral model for 2016, thereby allowing the Council to send a powerful message to all Somali parties about the importance of building on the achievements made since 2012 and the fact that the Council will not tolerate anything that hinders the political process. Days following our visit to Mogadishu, the Somali President exercised his executive powers to adopt the electoral model, paving the way for taking the necessary measures to complete the election process in time. In that context, and coinciding with the political and security developments in Somalia and the humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa, the Council's visit and its meeting with the President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, provided a good opportunity to hear the perspectives of an important actor in the Horn of Africa and to listen to his views on the challenges facing regional efforts to securing peace and security in Somalia and the possible means for strengthening cooperation between the Security Council and the important regional players in confronting the crises in those areas.

Based on the Council's interest in soliciting the views of regional actors, the Council concluded its visit with a meeting with the Permanent Representatives to the League of Arab States in Cairo. That was the first such meeting with the Arab League, in which we held

a frank dialogue about the challenges in the region, including terrorism. We also discussed the means to support the process in Somalia and the peace process in the Middle East, which encompassed the Arab League's perspective on the French initiative and the existing consensus on a number of principles that allow for the return to direct negotiations between the Israeli and Palestinian sides.

Fifthly, the joint meetings between the members of the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union were an opportunity for a strategic review of the state of our partnership on the tenth anniversary of the first such consultations. The in-depth discussions during the meetings reflected the common desire to develop joint cooperation towards a deeper and more effective partnership, the advantages of informal meetings between the two sides and the possibility of holding them regularly, when the situation allows, to permit regular dialogue between the two sides and form a common understanding of the challenges in the continent. The meetings also raised important issues about how to best use the annual consultations as a way to coordinate efforts and positions between the two sides and draw lessons to be applied within the broader sphere of promoting the role of regional organizations.

Finally, as this is the last meeting under the Egyptian presidency in the month of May, I would like to express my appreciation for the outstanding efforts on the part of my colleagues in the Egyptian delegation to making our presidency a success. I would also like to express my thanks to all delegations for the support provided to the Egyptian delegation during its presidency. I cannot forget to thank in particular the Council's secretariat and the entire team of interpreters for their excellent, professional work, which was a direct reason for our smooth operations during the month of May. I wish every success to His Excellency Ambassador François Delattre and his delegation during France's presidency in June. We assure them of our support in successfully carrying out their tasks.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.